

Our Voice

The spare change magazine

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Tom Jackson's Huron Carol benefit ...10

DECEMBER 1996 Vol. 3 No. 20

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**CHRISTMAS
CONSCIENCE**
gifts and more...
page 12

Our Voice

The spare change magazine

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OUR VOICE is published to provide an income opportunity for economically marginalized people in our society while communicating about their issues to the public.

For advertising rates and information, please contact **OUR VOICE** at 428-4001, Edmonton and 262-2693 in Calgary.

The VOICES

Now *Our Voice* is a magazine!

Our Voice is changing again. For some time we've been considering a change from the standard newspaper format. We hope you like our move to a magazine. There are a number of good reasons for the change. We probably should always have been a magazine.

The feature nature of the stories, their long-term reading value, is more like a magazine than a newspaper which has a short shelf life. **Our Voice** has always been a month-long or two-week period publication. No one looks to us for immediate news, but for the in-depth people stories that have lasting impact.

The magazine format is easier to read on the bus, over coffee, or in public places, where we are sold.

The magazine, however, costs a little more to produce, and takes a little more turn around time, we are also moving to monthly publication. The first of each month vendors will have the new magazine to sell.

As always, we are keen to hear from you. If you have something to say about our move to a magazine, please call, write or send us an e-mail. Please take a moment to fill in the Reader Survey on the back page.

Contributing to this issue:

Ellis Hiebert of Calgary wrote the great story on Sidney on pages 10 and 11 and gave us the piece on Calgary's Cash Corner, page 15, as well. Calgary editor **Barb Lauber** did the *Vendor Profile*, which we are keeping on the page 3, as well as a great deal of the work on the

Christmas gift ideas pages on 12 and 13 and our talk with Tom Jackson. Edmonton editor **Tom Hind** brings us the *Making good out of bad* story about a former vendor, as well as *Words on the Street* pieces and parts of the Christmas gifts feature. New writer **Dale Belcourt** contributed his piece *Oblivion*.

Linda Dumont contributed her commentary on going to a street workers conference in Calgary, as well as her cartoon.

Michael Walters wrote us a Christmas story, *The Promise*, on page 20, and helped with more of the poetry on page 18.

Laurie McCullough's Kiss the Bride Part 6, set in jail, is on page 21.

Thanks to **Susan Andrews** for the Crossword and to cartoonists **Jon Dykstra**, **Ed Gould**, and **Derek Oliver**.

Keith Wiley

The
VENDOR
by Jody
Timoffee.
Jody where
are you?
Give us a
call!



DECEMBER 1996 Vol. 3 No. 20

OUR VOICE welcomes your contribution. Letters sent to the editor are assumed to be for publication, unless otherwise indicated. **OUR VOICE** welcomes written submissions, particularly those on IBM or Mac compatible computer disk, cartoons, photographs or artwork. **OUR VOICE** cannot accept responsibility for any submission. No part of this

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EMAIL: sparechg@freenet.edmonton.ab.ca

Darcy Marchuk

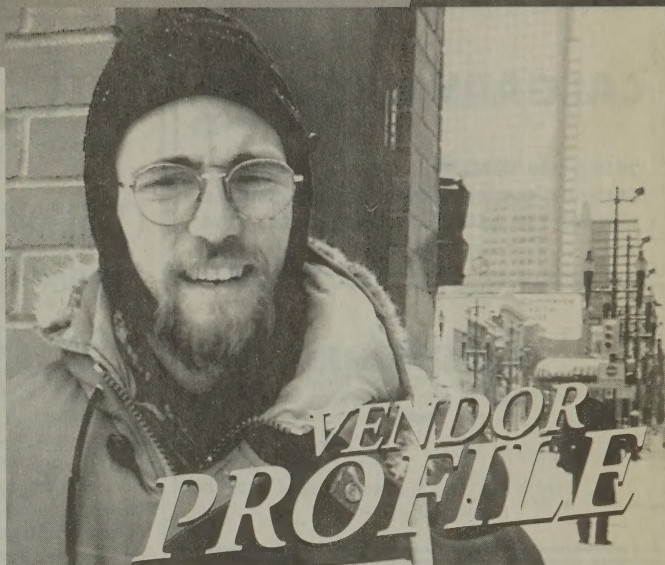
BY BARBARA LAUBER

Darcy Marchuk is saving his earnings from selling **Our Voice** to pay for a trip home at Christmas to visit his mother. Darcy is on social assistance, but his monthly cheque of \$394 doesn't allow for extras like a trip home.

Selling **Our Voice** comes readily to Darcy because he's an entrepreneur by nature. During the summer, Darcy makes a living weaving and selling hemp jewelry. Hemp comes from the same plant as marijuana, but contains none of the drug, THC.

Darcy has used hemp fabric, which is similar to burlap but softer, to make shirts, shorts, and wallets. He taught himself to weave hemp twine, learning from books, and sometimes trading techniques with other artisans. He braids hemp twine with beads to make anything from bracelets and chokers to dog leashes. Artistic ability as well as dexterity is required for his creations. His most impressive piece so far is an elaborate, beaded guitar strap. It took him twelve hours to make. He sold it for \$150. Unfortunately, hemp is a seasonal business; hemp items don't sell well in the wintertime. Darcy likes the people he meets selling **Our Voice**. His corner is outside an Italian restaurant. Once the owner came out and gave him some garlic bread while he was selling the paper.

Besides selling **Our Voice** and his hemp jewelry, Darcy has worked at a vari-



ety of jobs. His most memorable job was as Hilly Billy the gorilla, mascot of the Hilly Billy Vac Shack. Darcy can remember how hot it got in the gorilla suit on summer days in Saskatchewan. He's also worked as a dishwasher, a bike courier, and as a janitor for his mother's janitorial service.

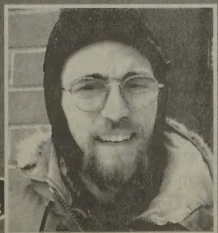
Darcy is 28. He was born in Monmantre, Saskatchewan. He was raised until he was eight on a small farm just outside Glenavon, Saskatchewan. Darcy's mother often complained about living on the farm, and his father usually replied, "Well, if you don't like it then leave." One day, Mrs. Marchuk took her husband at his word and packed up Darcy and his four older sisters and moved to Regina, where she supported the family by working at Sears as a parts clerk.

Darcy moved to Calgary when he was eighteen. He admits he's drifted around a

lot. He's lived on the street "too long." He's more focused now, he says. He's about to start a five-month Life Skills course. Then he wants to go back to school and learn more about computers. He's taught himself a lot already. His ambition is to become an Internet provider. ♦

The people who bring you **OUR VOICE**

This publication exists because of the efforts of the people who sell it to you on the street, the vendors. For our vendors **OUR VOICE** is a job that helps them to be independent and self-employed. Each issue we highlight one of our vendors in Vendor Profile to let you know a little bit about the people who bring you **OUR VOICE**. ♦



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NEWS OF THE WORLD



Clinking kleptomaniac needed water wings

It's all been going wrong for petty crooks. In Florida, a man stole \$450 from a garage only to be arrested when his car ran out of gas 30 yards away. Still worse were the experiences of French criminal Laurent Calbou, saved from drowning by a man he'd just robbed. Mr Calbou, 25, had burst into a Lyons bar brandishing a machete and forced customers to hand over 5000 francs worth of loose change. "He looked like a sausage man," recalled bar owner Marc Lefour. "He was

bulging with money and wobbled off." Mr Lefour had duly given chase, pursuing the clinking kleptomaniac to a nearby river where he lost his footing and tumbled into the water, the weight of the change in his pockets dragging him beneath the surface. "I pulled him up and said 'How much for your life?'" said Mr Lefour. "He said 5000 francs," which seemed a fair deal. So I dragged him out. "Next time I'll wear water wings," opined a bedraggled Mr. Calbou.

My Velociraptor had whiskers

The pet world has been rocked lately by a series of outrageous frauds. In Australia, a man has been imprisoned for spray painting common parrots and passing them off as valuable, rare ones. This was nothing, however, compared to the Taiwanese pet shop owner who has been selling bonsai dinosaurs. Mr Kim Boo Yuk placed advertisements in a newspaper claiming that, using "Jurassic Park technology", he had bred a selection of "prehistoric pygmy monsters" which were now for sale. Reaction was immediate, with over

200 transactions in the first week, including 86 Tyrannosaurus rexes, 60 Pterodactyls and one man-eating mollusk. "My husband gave me a Stegosaurus for our anniversary," said one woman. "I cried with joy." Mr Boo Yuk looked set for fame and fortune, and it was only when the dwarf carnivores displayed a predilection for sunflower seeds over raw meat that it was discovered they were actually gerbils concealed within India-rubber dinosaur outfits. "I knew something was wrong when I noticed my Velociraptor had whiskers," admitted one customer.

One lump of sugar, or would that be two?

Sugar alert! In Nebraska workers at a sugar refinery were buried under 30-foot mounds of the stuff after a freak explosion. "It was heaven," said 240 pound employee Ryan 'Piggy' Stokes. In Germany, meanwhile, a mild-mannered housewife attacked her husband in an argument about how many sugar grains she'd put in her coffee. Luther Gunn, 52, of Dortmund, was, according to his wife, an obsessive money saver. "He wouldn't let us flush the toilet," she explained. "And we only had one light bulb in the house, which we moved from room

to room depending on where we needed it." On the day in question Mr Gunn was berating his wife for using 53 grains in her morning coffee as opposed to the regulation 45. "I just lost control," she recalled. "I grabbed the cut-price egg whisk he bought for Christmas and poked him repeatedly in the eye with it." Mr Gunn remained phlegmatic about the episode. "My only regret," he said, "is that she broke the whisk and now I've got to buy a new one."

Beware of explosive snouts

It's been a week of mixed fortunes for noses. In France, a woman was killed after she inadvertently pushed a lipstick holder up her nostril, rupturing her brain. "It was a Max Factor 4, with anti-chapping agent," said her distraught husband. Slightly more fortunate was American engineer Nicolas Villarruel, of Denver, who spent three years with an explosive charge stuck up his nose. The minute device, designed to activate car air bags, had been inserted into Mr Villarruel's nose as a stag joke. By the next

morning, however, the prank had been forgotten, and the gormless groom duly tied the knot and settled down into married life, blissfully unaware of his potentially explosive nose. "I had no idea that it was there," he explained. "Magnets would stick to my nose for no apparent reason, but there wasn't any pain." Only when his wife pushed her finger into his snout during a particularly exotic bout of lovemaking was the object discovered, whereupon he was rushed to the hospital and operated on by doctors.

Above articles compiled by Paul Sussman in The Big Issue, London England's street-sold magazine.



welcome!

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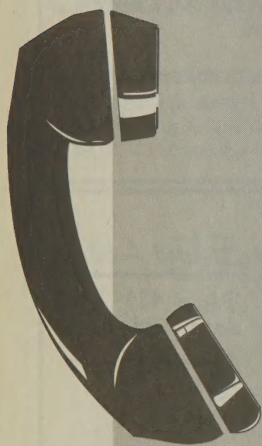


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Talking Back

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comments for this column.

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The question this issue:

**What are
your good
wishes for
people this
season and
in the New
Year?**

Why are so many native people in desperate situations?

We were being deliberately provocative when we asked "Why are so many native people in desperate situations?" We didn't get very many responses, but one woman called with her essay, a manifesto really. We didn't have room for all of it, but have reprinted much of it here.

Alcoholism is one of the greatest factors that has led to the destruction and downfall of entire Indian nations. Natives today are recovering from the devastating effects of alcoholism, of emotional and spiritual deprivation, of child abuse, neglect and abandonment.

Like a domino effect it seems never-ending. Today we are seeing some signs of healing. A wave of recovery has begun among native people. That wave is beginning to break the cycle by a return to native forms of cultural ceremonies and spirituality. In this way natives today can break the domino effect that alcohol has instigated and replace it with courage and hope.

History books do not state that one forceful calculated form of oppression was the introduction of alcohol to native people. When natives once inherited a sense of worth and pride, they became the inheritors of grief, apathy and fear. Spiritual deprivation, emotional, physical and alcohol abuse, depression and poverty are all easily transferred from one generation to the next.

We must remember that in the span of a few years native life had changed drastically. Once free people, they were put on small parcels of land and were told to survive. Our land and religion was taken from us and later our parents and grandparents were taken away from us and put into boarding schools.

We had all of this pain and passed it on from one generation to the next. It made it easy to turn to alcohol because it deadened the pain for a little while. It's a generational thing.

Today many natives feel hopelessness and are without spirit. So many are locked into grieving over what has happened to our people, not just in this generation but in past gen-

erations as well. Many are grieving through alcohol our loss of not only our people but our culture. We are born into this grief. It is a history of a people who once tried to forget but are now called to remember forever.

Many natives continue to struggle with oppression and poverty and trying to find a balance between the white man's world and their own culture. They continue to struggle with the destroying effects of alcohol abuse, living with the pain of having been abused as children and as adults. The statistics are staggering.

Natives are emerging with a stronger and different voice to be heard. A new sense of Indian pride has begun emerging. More ceremonial sweat lodges and sundances appeared. More natives are taking part in spiritual practices and regaining pride in the native culture.

Spiritual oppression still exists for many who live with criticism, disdain and cynicism for native spirituality and culture. This oppression is an obstacle to healing and progress.

Native philosophy and ways of looking at things is different. It doesn't mean we are smarter, just different. Not much has changed in the past one hundred years. We need our healing ways; without it I don't think we have much of a chance of getting ahead of what alcoholism has done to native people.

People think that alcohol is the main problem of our people but it is just a symptom. Among our people I believe it has been a lack of values and culture, those that have to do with the spiritual nature of things. Our people were cast into a vacuum of spiritual deprivation. When we return to spiritual ways we see improvements, people getting sober and lives being healed. In the old ways of thinking everything was spiritual, every day was spiritual. When we go back to the spiritual ways we see healing. It is a time for healing.

**Name withheld by request
from Calgary**

Christmas for the kids

We've come a long way from the classic Charles Dickens tale of Scrooge and Tiny Tim. Canada today is a long way from the world of Oliver Twist and the street urchins, from the sooty-faced poverty of Victorian London.

Please sir, may I have some more?

There has been a century of progress since Tiny Tim faced a cold and tough Christmas. After years of moving toward a country of prosperity and well-being for all, the last few years have seen poverty growing. Is the clock turning back in Canada?

There are modern Tiny Tim stories. They are stories of kids more likely to live with just their Mom or Dad. And that Mom or Dad is more likely to not have a job, or have lost a job recently. This year many Canadian children face a grim Christmas, just like Tiny Tim.

The Canadian Council on Social Development has just released a report: The Progress of Canada's Children, and it has some good news... but also some realities that are pretty daunting:

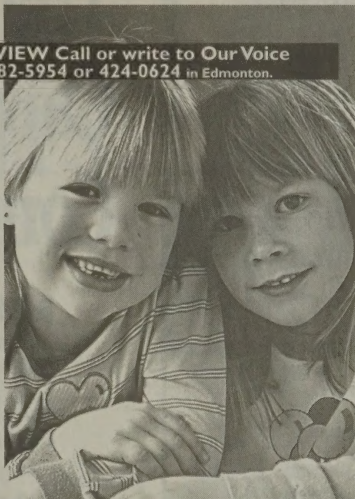
Canada has the world's second highest rate of child poverty among industrialized countries, second only to the United States.

** In 1994, one in five children under 18 years -- 1.4 million -- lived in poverty.*

** 40% of today's welfare recipients are children.*

** 500,000 children and their families live in housing that does not meet federal standards for affordability and adequacy.*

** In 1994, the average income of poor families with children was \$8,300 below*



the poverty line.

Families are facing a cost crunch -- they are caught between spending an estimated \$150,000 to raise a child to age 18, and historic levels of household debt. At the same time, market incomes of low- and moderate-income families dropped between 1984 and 1994, and average after-tax income for all families with children remained virtually stagnant (dropping from \$43,800 in 1984 to \$43,700 in 1994).

Those are the statistics. Here in this magazine you read the stories behind the statistics.

We do want to play the role of Marley's ghost and rattle the chains of conscience. But can we get to the modern Scrooge and trouble his sleep? Today there is not likely to be a face-to-face encounter between Scrooge and Tim's father. The modern money-counter is likely to manage business from a glass office tower. And Tim's father could be on a list of people that were laid off to improve the bottom line, people the modern Scrooge has never met.

Reports like that by the Council on Social Development will rattle some chains, just like Marley did. What will be the result?

Keith Wiley

Thank you to our readers and supporters

By buying this publication you are helping people survive, eat and live their life. It's your support that makes this project and this publication work. **Our Voice** is an innovative approach to income for people and it is an innovative way for people to directly help other people.

Your support also helps to give poorer people in our community a voice, this voice, **Our Voice**.

Perhaps it is not surprising that this issue of **Our Voice** is the most important one of the whole year to vendors. Many more people buy this paper, and contribute generously at this time of year. It is a generous season.

On behalf of the vendors, thank you for your support. It's been tremendous over the past three years, however it doesn't pay all the bills. **Our Voice** is a project of the three charitable agencies that back it: Bissell Centre and Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation in Edmonton and the Calgary Urban Project Society (CUPS). It is the commitment of these agencies to the concept and the productive results of the project that keep it going.

If you would like to support **Our Voice** further, to sustain it into the future, there are a number of things you can do. You can tell us what you think, give us feedback by filling in the Reader Survey on the back page, and add any comments you would like. Consider advertising in **Our Voice** for your business or organization. We reach a large audience of thousands of concerned people like yourself. Finally you can help by making a financial contribution to the good work of one of the agencies backing the project. They can issue you a charitable donation receipt. Please indicate that your contribution is for **Our Voice**.

On behalf of all of us at **Our Voice**, thank you and have a Merry Christmas.

Keith Wiley

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The Huron Carol Concerts

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SASKATOON

Wednesday, December 11

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WINNIPEG

Saturday, December 21

Walker Theatre

WORDS on the street

Watering hose blues

"I can't sell the papers right now," says Bear.

"Why not?" I ask him. "Too cold?"

"Nah," he replies. "Kidney stones."

"What, you had an operation?"

"Nah. I passed one through my watering hose last week. Got it in a vial in my pocket." He takes the vial out and gives it a shake. A loud rattle ensues.

"That's too bad. Can't the Health Clinic help you?"

"Yeah. Right now I'm on antibiotics and some pain killers. But I'm still too sore to stand outside and freeze selling the paper," he says. "Though I could sure use the cash right now," he adds. "Maybe by next week I'll be better."

"I sure hope so, Bear, for your sake."

Tom Jackson's Huron Carol benefit for the homeless

BY BARBARA LAUBER

Tom Jackson, star of the acclaimed CBC television series, *North of 60*, is a man with a cause. A great deal of Jackson's time goes toward fundraising for an organization he founded, the Christmas & Winter Relief Association. "There are many great causes in the world and I would like to be involved in as many as possible," Jackson says. "However, in our lives, our efforts are best put to areas where you can focus on one thing. My cause has always been with homeless people."

Jackson says he can best serve the cause of the homeless through fundraising. "I lack the skill myself to get in the trenches. I don't know how or what to say to someone who's in trauma. But I can and will support other groups that do get into the trenches. That's basically the mandate of the Association."

Every year since 1988, the Association has produced a Canada-wide series of benefit concerts called the Huron Carol. This year, the concerts will feature Jackson and Shannon Gaye, Melanie Doane, and Charlie Major, as well as local performers drawn from each city the concert plays in.

"We don't have any administration costs," Jackson notes proudly. His own Calgary office runs the organization and sponsors are secured to cover the expenses associated with the Huron Carol concerts. Thus 100% of the ticket sales goes to the Canadian Association of Food Banks, which will return the money raised to local food banks. Through matching agreements, food banks are able to turn each donated dollar into \$20 of food-buying power.

"Our mandate is from time to time criticized as a band-aid," Jackson admits. "It's more than a band-aid to me. It does two things. First of all, it keeps people alive until greater minds than mine can figure out how to solve the problems of homelessness and the deepness of how far that goes. And secondly, it gives people hope. I think there are a lot of people out there who simply need to believe that somebody else cares and that ray of

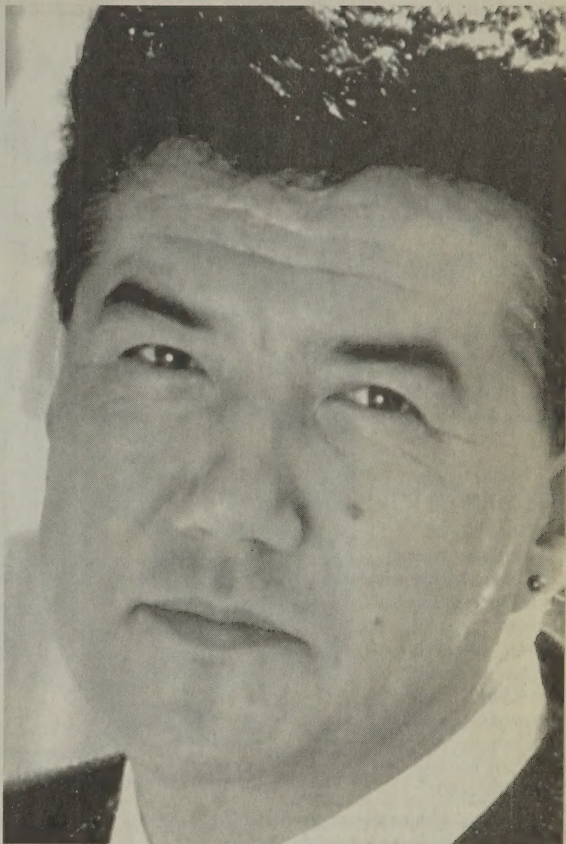


PHOTO: Brooke Palmer, Courtesy of the CBC

hope may be the thing that gets them through to the next morning. And that's the simplicity of what we're trying to achieve. I don't have the answer for the entire problem."

That Side of the Window is the title of Jackson's new album, to be released in early 1997. The album features songs about street life. All the proceeds from this and earlier Huron Carol albums go to the Canadian Association of Food Banks.

Jackson finds it hard to explain exactly what motivates him. "You never know whose life you're saving. You don't know what it means to get people from one day to the next. You don't know what children they'll bear. You have no idea." Jackson himself lived on the street for about six years, from the age of sixteen to 22. "I was young and excited and found camaraderie," he explains.

He doesn't worry about potential abuse of his generosity. "I hear a lot of people babble about others who take advantage of these situations. But there are people out there who desperately need this help. There are people in all walks of life who take advantage of others. And that's fine. That's the nature of the beast. You live with that." ❖

The meandering homes of Sidney

A resident of inner-city housing

BY EILIS HIEBERT

The YWCA is eighteen year-old Sidney's temporary home. She is in a six-bed dorm with five other women. "Everybody's just here for a while," says Sidney. "There's no privacy and you really have to watch your stuff. But I have nowhere else to go right now."

"I'm scared of those drop-in places in this big city," Sidney is talking about the Drop-in Centre in Calgary for men and women, where numbers are getting dangerously close to safety and fire regulation limits. The YWCA, the biggest provider of women's housing in Canada, opened up its vacant beds for the overflow of women. After alerting the Department of Family and Social Services that someone needed to take responsibility for this homeless situation, the YWCA received block funding to help with costs.

"We have the beds occupied," says Marcia Davies, YWCA Director of Housing, but food is becoming the big problem. These women have a safe, affordable place to stay," she added, "but they have to eat!" The Food Bank helps out, and generous Calgarians have responded by donating food. "Still we run out," said Davies. She also points out that the worsening situation coincides with two events: the 1994 cuts in welfare rates and the 1995 health cuts.



FILE PHOTO.
ILLUSTRATION ONLY



Sidney is a beautiful, normal, wholesome-looking girl. She looks like the typical high school kid you see on the bus to school, with hair the colour of wheat, clean blue jeans and jean jacket and a knapsack. The chain of events which led Sidney to inner-city housing began in her Lethbridge home. Her single mom gave up a sound medical job, planning to go to an exotic destination with a long-time boyfriend.

"She even opened a joint bank account

...continued

Martians coming

"Life on Mars has immigrated to earth," says Bill, who's been vending **Our Voice** for a year now.

"What do you mean, Bill?" I ask him. He chuckles.

"You know what I mean, Tom," he replies. "Every once in a while a weirdo will stop and talk to me, trying to twist my mind with 'other world' stories. I call them space aliens. Even though I haven't seen tentacles or gills on them." He laughs.

"So how's vending going for you right now?" I ask.

"Just getting by," confides Bill. "Gotta sell 20 papers a day to pay for my hotel room and a hot meal and tobacco. I ain't on welfare or anything. So if I don't sell at least 20, I'm on the street that night."

"Selling in this weather, I gotta alternate hands with one glove. When one hand gets cold, I put the glove on it and flash the paper with my warm hand, until it gets cold. Then I change hands again."

"Why just one glove?" I ask stupidly.

"Ya can't wear two 'cause ya can't manipulate the papers right," he says.

"Any other problems with the paper right now?"

"No," says Bill. "Frankly I'm damn glad I have vending as an option. If it weren't for **Our Voice**, I don't know how I'd survive."

#SOCIAL INDICATORS

The People numbers

Facts about Poverty in Canada

Here are some facts about poverty in Canada that everyone should know:

- ☆ The number of people living in poverty in Canada in 1981 was 3,624,000. The number in 1992 was 4,320,000, an increase of 696,000 Canadians (19%) in 11 years.
- ☆ The rate of unemployment in Canada in 1971 was 6.2%; by 1981 it was 7.5%; 10.3% in 1991; and 11.3% in 1992.
- ☆ The average monthly number of unemployment insurance beneficiaries in Canada in 1981 was 720,280; it was 1,385,710 in 1991, an increase of 92%.
- ☆ In 1980 there was 1 food bank in Canada. By August 1992 there were over 342 food banks registered with the Canadian Association of Food Banks.



Statistics provided by Winnipeg Harvest via their WEB Page at: www.expressnet.com/harvest



The People

First I need some money

I want to go back to school...

with him," says Sidney, who never trusted the boyfriend. "She worked with him for years and he always treated her rotten." One morning the boyfriend and the bank account both vanished. Sidney's mom is now living in her car in Lethbridge.

"I hadn't seen my dad in sixteen years," says Sidney, "but I decided to come to Calgary to live with him and his new wife and two little boys." That didn't last long. Her dad began abusing Sidney almost immediately.

"He'd push, shove, kick or hit me, because he says I was in his face," says Sidney. "He kept telling me I was just like my mom."

Sidney's dad did register her in a vocational high school.

"I got the highest marks in my school in science." Sidney's amber eyes light up with pride. "I love science," she says. "And I had the BEST counselor," she says of the woman who facilitated Sidney's move to an aunt's place. A friend at school became Sidney's

boyfriend. He and Sidney moved in with her aunt, a single working mother with four young children. They babysat and did dishes and housework in return for room and board. "But it was too hard on my aunt financially, to have two extra people around for four months," says Sidney. "And she just didn't understand teenagers. Even though she kicked me and my boyfriend out, I still love her." Pastoral Care Counselling helped Sidney through this move.

"I'll stay here at the Y till the end of the month, when my boyfriend comes back from his Vancouver summer job," says Sidney. No males are allowed in the YWCA women's residence. Sidney's boyfriend will have a job on a ranch. "And I'm going to the Employment Centre today," Sidney says, "and I want to go back to school. But first I need some money just to be able to live."

Looking around the packed dorm, Sidney says wistfully, "Our own apartment would be nice."

Giving at Ch

*It's a generous time of year. C
special ways to show you*

Edmonton's Santas Anonymous

It was a simple plan: guarantee every less fortunate child a gift under the tree at Christmas. A few volunteers started it and in the beginning, the demand was small. But with the support and perseverance of Jerry Forbes, the General Manager of Edmonton's 630 CHED, the program grew. Last year Santas Anonymous collected, wrapped and delivered a new Christmas gift to over 25,000 children.

Santas Anonymous needs your support and help again this year. Sponsors may drop off a NEW, UNWRAPPED TOY at any major shopping centre in Edmonton. If you wish to give a CASH DONATION, please take it to 630

CHED, 5204 - 84 Street.

The main depot is open November 26 to December 23 from 9 am to 9 pm, seven days a week.

*Depot volunteers must be sixteen years of age or older.

*Volunteers needed to wrap gifts between 9 am and 5 pm weekdays.

*Drivers with cars to distribute gifts are needed. Initial Delivery Day: Saturday, December 21, starting at 10 am.

For more information: call Jeff Sliwa at 630 CHED 440-6368.

A service alternative in Edmonton

BY TOM HIND

Socially-conscious Christmas gifts are gifts which are produced by manufacturers who pay a fair wage. They are gifts that do not exploit child workers, as happens too often in China. They are gifts that produce no environmental damage, and, finally they are gifts that are sold at a fair price to buyers.

Some examples of socially conscious gifts are crafts made out of recycled materials, like ornaments and table coasters made from oil drums, or woven coloured streamers made from palm leaves, dolls, angels and jewellery made from water hyacinths. These and other items may be purchased from Global Village Crafts and other "socially conscious" stores.

Another example of a socially conscious gift is a Bissell Centre Christmas Catalogue. Choosing from the catalogue you may contribute the cost of a service provided by the Centre for its many clients. It works like this: you complete the form in the Catalogue, saying who you are giving on behalf of. You stipulate which gift or service you want to contribute and your personal greeting. Bissell Centre sends the recipient a specially designed Christmas card which tells them what service has been given in their name (but not its value.) You receive confirmation of the gift purchase and a tax receipt for the amount.

Examples of "service gifts" available are: Rainy Day Activities (\$15.00), Children's Hot Chocolate (\$25.00), which buys hot chocolate for the children's winter programs, and many more. Call Bissell Centre at 423-2285

Christmas

Voice explores some giving and generosity!



Former **Our Voice** vendor Ken Russell is a good chum of Santas.

What you can do in Calgary

The Mustard Seed Street Ministry is looking for wool socks. Buy a pair of wool socks. One inside the other and fill up the space with toiletries or other items appropriate for a streetper-son. Packages can be dropped off until Christmas Eve at 102-11 Ave SE.

The Miracle Toy Store needs new, wrapped toys and stocking stuffers, as well as wrapping paper and candy. Especially for gifts for older children from 9-16. The store allows needy parents to select a gift which they know their child will like, and a package marked, "boy, 8-10". Gifts can be dropped off at Connection, 2nd floor, 128-7th Ave SE.

Donations of warm winter clothing are welcome at this time of year. Bring them to the Calgary Urban Project Society at 100 Ave SE.

The Salvation Army is looking for people to donate their kettles and for non-perishable money, and toys for their Adopt-a-child program. Turkey vouchers would be appreciated. Call 284-9380 or drop off donations at 1402 8th Ave NW. The Salvation Army helped 3,000 families last year.

Donations for Zairean refugees can be made to the Red Cross Central Africa Appeal, Alta Vista Drive, Ottawa, On, K1G 4J5. 600-668-2866 to make a telephone call.

Some socially-conscious suggestions

We visited several outlets in Calgary to find out what they would suggest for socially-conscious Christmas presents. Gift wrapping ideas were to use plain brown paper, shopping bags or plain newsprint and paint, colour, or decorate in any fashion you so desire. Other sources of wrapping paper could be the coloured comics from weekend newspapers. If nothing else use wrapping paper that contains recycled paper (post-consumer waste).

Perhaps donate the gift equivalent to a charity. Encourage your family to reduce their expectations for expensive gifts. Shop for gifts from local businesses in Calgary: The Eco-Shop, Arusha, Global Village Crafts, Project Plowshares Holiday Peace Fair, or Bow Chinook Barter Community and local crafts, artisans. Go for service oriented gifts such as meals, yard care, massages, child care, house cleaning etc.

Look at spending time with family, friends, neighbours instead of focusing on the quantity / quality of gifts. How about gifts that can be used by more than one person in the family. Shift the focus to practical, useful gifts. Gifts that will be more than a passing fad or trend: i.e. educational events, personal development, promote personal health, support the arts and cultural events in the city. One gift that I would like to see more people give is time for themselves. In this busy society time to rest, relax, and rejuvenate the body, mind and spirit. Time to enjoy those personal pleasures often put off.

The Eco-Shop

1. Reusable shopping bags.
2. Environmentally friendly soaps, cleaners, personal hygiene products, shampoos, paper products.
3. Hand-made and recycled papers, journals, writing paper, bags, wrapping paper and cards.



Global Village Gifts

1. Decorate a tree from around the world. Straw ornaments, palm leaf garlands and more.
2. Jute products, gift bags, Christmas stockings, card holders.



Arusha Cross-Cultural Centre

1. Bridgehead coffee products, Rainforest Crunch snack.
2. Crafts and art work from Kenya Connection.
3. Books on a variety of social issues.



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WORDS on the street

Oblivion

BY DALE BELCOURT

I saw him one day as I walked down the sidewalk. I stopped and stared because he looked familiar, someone whom I once knew. Looking at him, I could not believe that a person like him would be out and about during the day.

Not wanting to meet his gaze for as long as possible, my eyes wandered down to his feet. I could tell that his footwear used to be shoes by the heels which jutted out from under a mound of duct tape. The tape itself had seen the better part of its days. At first I wondered how he could take them off. Then, on second thought, why would he even want to?

Above the tape I spotted something which could have been socks in their newer days. Today they were nothing but dirt-encrusted cloth, encircling bony ankles.

His socks were partially hidden by frayed and faded pants. The pants were covered with patches on the patches and the seams were held together with safety pins. Imitating a belt was an assortment of shoe laces, wrapped around a waist that probably would never again expand past the protruding hips that helped to hold up the oversized pants.

A drab olive shirt extended out from under a partially opened coat. Why, I wondered, did he only button the worn grey coat from the top down to the middle? I then looked even closer and I noticed that there were no buttons beyond the waist.

It is funny how the mind drifts off to insignificant questions. What did it matter what the clothes looked like, or how many buttons were on the coat?

What really matters is the eyes and what they hold.

Still avoiding his eyes, I scanned his face, a face surrounded by what resembled string dredged through oil-drenched dirt and thrown on his scalp. It had to be hair, although thickly matted and probably not washed in years. An exaggeration; he must have been at one time a clean and respected person, hadn't he? The face was ravaged, not by time, but from the tolls of existence; an existence that lasted from day-to-day but never for tomorrow.

It was now time to see the part that I feared the most. Those eyes which are the window of his being sucked me down into deep pools of despair in which I thought I would drown. I felt the touch of madness and thin fibres of death. As I fell deeper I saw the gates to a universe of oblivion, where nothing mattered, not life, not even death - a universe where caring did not exist, where nothing existed.

I screamed then. And as I put my hands to my face I saw that I was holding on to something. I looked at it and realized that it was the reason that I was out in the daylight. It was my bottle of wine, still encased in the paper bag. I hurried on, leaving the image in the mirrored window, and those terrible eyes.

As I settled down in my place of hiding I began to giggle, because I knew that I held in my hand the key to that universe, the universe I was about to enter through my wine, where tomorrow wouldn't matter and neither would I.

My last thought before I entered the gates was "I will never go out into the daylight again."

CASH Corner

Calgary's free enterprise labour market

BY EILIS HIEBERT

Need your fence painted? Furniture moved? Yard cleaned up? Renovations? Go down to Cash Corner on 12th Avenue between Centre Street and First Street S.W. in Calgary. There are lots of able-bodied men to choose from, for \$8 to \$10 an hour or so. Cash. Ask Bino, a regular employer of 'Cash Corner' guys. Bino buys, renovates and sells houses.

"Mostly they do good work," says Bino. "Me, I work with them, show them what to do, and they work good along with me. I hire 'em all the time for short jobs of under two weeks."

Guy Ruddick, blonde, fresh-faced, looking like a 22 year-old jogger, is standing on Cash Corner waiting for an employer like Bino to come along. Guy is hopping up and down to keep warm in the Wednesday 6:45 a.m. Calgary dawn.

"Sometimes we get a few hours work, sometimes a few days," says Guy, taking a drag off his friend Mike's cigarette, expert eyes casing the Corner's two bordering streets. Both men's eyes are continually darting from car to van to truck to car, gauging who's looking for workers. "We got seasonal jobs in seismic, but we need some cash till we get paid Friday," he added. "Some of the regulars don't much like us because we're not regulars." chips in Mike. "We're competition for each job, eh?"

By 7 a.m. Mike and Guy are both gone in a red truck.

"Landscaping for 3 or 4 hours, looks like," says



a man who just arrived from a Mustard Seed Church breakfast, and overheard Mike and Guy's negotiations with the red truck employer.

"Eight bucks an hour, not bad."

Most men on the Corner come here day after day, week after week. Willing to work, they're picked up in all kinds of vehicles by all kinds of men. Those who work the Corner are anywhere from 18 to 68 and mostly single, according to 3-year Corner veteran Rob. They're guarded with one another, particularly about their private lives.

"Some don't want their families to know they're working the Corner," says Rob, "y'know, they phone home to mom or dad or maybe a wife or somethin' and say 'Oh, yeah, I'm workin' and doin' just fine.' But over time you get to know things about people."

Rob, 40 something, originally from Saskatchewan, has moved around a lot. He has no jacket on in this cold dawn, yet looks comfortable and ready to work. Rob knows the Corner as well as anybody.

"We got all kinds here," he says. "An engineerin' fella or somethin' laid off from an oil company works the Corner. Well-dressed and says he pays \$550 a month rent. I told him 'Buddy, if you're working the Corner, your lifestyle just changed!' What does he need an apartment like that for? Family problems, maybe," says Rob vaguely.

Then there's the 68 year old man who's been on the Corner for two years.

"We got all kinds here," he says. "An engineerin' fella or somethin' laid off from an oil company works the Corner. Well-dressed and says he pays \$550 a month rent. I told him 'Buddy, if you're working the Corner, your lifestyle just changed!' What does he need an apartment like that for? Family problems, maybe," says Rob vaguely.

...continued

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Firoz's volunteer work with Junior Achievement has touched the lives of many young children.



Canada's Gas Station

CASH Corner

Calgary's free enterprise labour market

"Think he'd get a pension, wouldn't you?" says Rob with the same vagueness. The men don't know or ask much about each other's lives.

More cars cruising. A few more workers gone from the Corner. Someone always nonchalantly listens and overhears. Word goes around fast about the price and the length of work.

Suddenly Jake, 30 something, warming his hands on his coffee cup, exclaims angrily to three other guys:

"Ya hear that ole lady in the hotel's been callin' us bums again?" "Says we're hangin' around her hotel," he says, pointing to the Quality Inn. "We're not bums. We're honest guys, looking for work!"

"Sure beats welfare," says his buddy.

One thing most of the men on the Corner agree on is 'the uselessness of the Hays Building Manpower Office.'

"Jobs posted there are gone weeks before you phone," says another 30-something man who didn't want to be identified in any way. "Then there's the Drop-In Job Centre," he says, "but that lawyer fella down there, he got his favourites. Sends out number 40 before number 2 sometimes," he says.

"Maybe he can't count," says his buddy Pete drily.

Later Rob says "They been tryin'

to shut this Corner down for years." says "Dunno why, though," he added. "It's a good service. Places like Edmonton don't have a place like this. No loitering, it seems. They have the Bissell Centre, where you get a number. Feel like you're playing Bingo. You can wait all day till someone calls 'Under the B, 5,'" says Rob chuckling.

"But some guys get on full-time from the Corner here in Calgary. I've stood here from 9 to 4 some

days, but I sure get some good work here. One day an Air Canada employee hired a whole bunch of us to unload the U-Haul he'd moved from Ontario. \$12 an hour we got paid."

"Another day, coupla weeks ago, a guy in an old beat-up Cadillac drives up, says he's got 650 sheets of plywood to unload. 'How much?' he says. Me and my two buddies, we told him \$8 to \$10 an hour. Turns out there were only 350

sheets of plywood. Guy takes us to an acreage where the people paid him \$1,500 cash and he'd salvaged the plywood from a crashed load. It only took us 2 hours," says Rob proudly. "And the guy paid us each \$100." "Nice, eh? But that don't happen often. Usually you just get \$8 to \$10 an hour."

There are moves afoot to close down Cash Corner. The men on the Corner agree it does a better job than other labour alternatives in Calgary and as Bino says, the men on the Corner are desperate for work, and willing to work. ♦

The People

A funny thing happened in Calgary.....

BY LINDA DUMONT

"I'm a street worker," I replied to a man's curious question in the hotel lobby, "I'm here for the National Street Workers' Conference."

His expression said it all; he was sorry he had asked that. As he edged away, I could tell he was unfamiliar with the term "street worker", so I hastily explained that I worked in street ministry in Edmonton.

It was a good beginning.

I walked into my room at the Palliser Hotel to find a basket of goodies awaiting me. "Wow," this is great," I thought, I had come with a one way bus ticket and little spending money. My sponsorship money covered the hotel and conference fees and little else. I had eaten half a bag of fruit drops before I read the sign on the basket. Apparently everything I ate would have to be paid for on check-out.

Those were three dollar fruit drops.

Downstairs in the hotel, I met the Wisemen from Manitoba. They distribute **Our Voice** in Winnipeg, and recognized me from my vendor profile. I was able to sell them a poetry book and two calendars so I had lunch money in Calgary.

The first night, a friend and I walked over to the Mustard Seed to compare it with the one in Edmonton. I tried to stop one of the street people to ask for directions, but he nearly ran in his haste to get away.

"Linda," my friend exclaimed, "You scared that poor man. It's your leather jacket."

That coat is genuine recycled leather. It was discarded after it went moldy. I retrieved it, dried it, aired it out and washed it down with lemon scented detergent so it only smells slightly of mold. At Mustard Seed, Calgary, I was greeted with "Hi Linda." The first two people I saw had worked with me as volunteers in Edmonton! They were standing in the line-up for soup in Calgary.

My brother lives a few blocks from Mustard Seed. He's the landlord of a rooming house; the one with the sign on the front door that

...continued



"Sure beats welfare."

POETRY

A funny thing happened in Calgary.....

reads: "No pimps allowed." He doesn't mean it as a joke either. Pimps find it too difficult to separate their business from their home life, he says.

I got to his place early Saturday morning. "Did you pass a lot of men lined up on the next street?" he asked. "That's cash corner. There used to be an employment office there. Now men who are available for work stand on the street waiting to be picked up. Some of the guys are regulars and do quite well."

My brother is definitely not in favor of casual labour outfits where people work for minimum wage regardless of what the employer is paying. "Those guys are crooks," he says.

The Street Level conference was definitely not your ordinary church conference. Even Pat Nixon, who chaired the conference, was dressed in blue jeans and a t-shirt.

The speakers were talking about real issues.

Rick Tobias, director of Yonge Street Mission, Toronto, said in his opening night talk that we, as street workers are all slightly dysfunctional, and that many of us are drawn to work on the fringes of the church because we feel less threatened working with street people. Listening to him, I could identify with much of what he said. For me the street work is not dangerous or frightening, but a safety zone. He spoke of the challenges facing street workers in the areas of prevention, harm reduction and employment. According to Tobias, 90 per cent of all hunger is caused by unemployment, and the biggest role of the church is to help people to feel needed. "Unfortunately, with our present government, the people we care about are going to get beat up," Tobias predicted.

There was much to think about all at once. ♦

Street Warrior

He wanders the streets with no mission in mind

Seeking out those that may be swallowed,

Swallowed whole, devoured by the spirits.

The street spirits that roam our city after dark.

Many warriors have come and gone, Many more have lost the battle.

He never loses.

As with each battle he loses, There is another waiting to be faced.

While many of you have forgotten about us,

Us, the weak and less seen on our streets,

Consider him our saviour.

Many of us,

Would not survive without him.

Many would not survive,

Without that giant of a man,

Who stands no higher than five foot five.

Such a small man.

Such a huge helping hand.

We are all thankful

Thankful for this man that god has sent to us.

by Tim Sharpe

This poem was the winner in the Street Heroes category of the recent Songs of the Street poetry contest.

Maybe tears

Maybe tears serve to

magnify our vision

that we might see

into the spirit world

that we might see God

so much clearer

Shadows

These grey clouds do not weep

Without wind they hang

and still there are shadows, many shadows.

They live in the absence of light in that place between the light and the darkness

seemingly impervious to pain

in their twilight world

seeking not, seeking not, seeking always

crying out "see me, see me, listen, please listen"

and I have been caught in the shadow of a shadow

seeing the invisible

hearing the voiceless

engulfed, overwhelmed, swept away

by the depth of pain, the relentless chaos, the purity of affection

to touch the soul of a shadow, to touch such grace

one is changed, forever.

Like the grey clouds without wind

I do not weep

I just hang, motionless

screaming out for the sun

while the shadows move on, always moving on.

A shadow died today, Ben is gone.

by Rick Guthrie

Written in memory of Ben Jackknife.

Winner of the Shelter category in the recent Songs of the Street poetry contest.

Making good out of bad

Former vendor boosts community

BY TOM HIND

"Nobody grows up wanting to live out of the end of a needle," says Gord Lucier, a former **Our Voice** vendor, who is now running a home renovation company, GK Cleaning and Renovations.

Gord and his partner Karla are working at renovating houses and businesses and they are also doing interior renovations on themselves, changing from "isolates" into a community-oriented couple. Both are gung-ho about making their business a success though, as Gord says, "right now the money flow could be better." Both have an attitude of positive hope in life. It literally emanates from them.

The attitude is strengthened and reinforced by the activities they are involved in — church projects, work projects that they hire local inner-city people to do, foster-parenting a seven year-old girl, helping each other stay straight through mutual support and understanding when problems arise.

Karla comes out of a middle-class background, used to be a classical pianist. She also used to be a junkie, like Gord. "If you're a bathtub junkie* like I was," she says, "you isolate yourself to the point where you have two choices: to live or die. I was a big time junkie, heroin and coke, before starting to turn my life around as a volunteer cook at Mustard Seed Church. That's where I first met Gord."

BELOW: One of the first renovation projects. **INSET:** Gord Lucier



"When I worked security at the International Hotel, my mental mode was that of a predator," says Gord candidly. "I was always stalking money. Money gave me a feeling of power and control over others, a real rush. I didn't care where it came from, dope deals, scams. It didn't matter to me then that I was hurting others. But that's changed now."

"The change began when I started vending **Our Voice** last February and March. Then I met Karla and I got involved with the Church. I started taking myself and the sum of my life seriously. It was like I was infected with the bug to open up to others and to help them where I could. I had a real anger problem back then. But I've since completed courses in anger management, living without violence, and cognitive living skills, all of which have helped me get a grip on myself."

"When you've had enough pain, you change," adds Karla. "I once had a sense of community, until I lost it to drugs. I lost my kids to coke."

"Me, I never had a sense of community, what with being brought up by alcoholic parents and ending up with a drinking problem on top of my drug habits," says Gord.

"Now, both Karla and I want to be significant in the lives of inner-city people. A lot of people down here become invisible. You see drunks passed out on the sidewalk and you walk by them, leave them alone. Well, that's not the proper attitude to have towards people who live in your community. It seems that Karla and I have developed the beginning of an informed conscience. We're both living by community rules and we feel real good about that. For me it's a first. And, you know, it's not empty inside me anymore."

"I work on community endeavors, here I am talking about, among other things, networking work skills of tradesmen within the community. People are not to be given up on. Just because you are an inner city person doesn't mean you've got nothing to give the community in terms of work skills."

"Karla and I manage the skills within the community and contract out work to local people adept at roofing, laying hardwood floors, interior-exterior painting, demolition and construction of walls in houses and businesses. We can usually come in below market price for various jobs. Businesses and home owners appreciate it. The inner city people we hire for the jobs appreciate the work. In our own way we are telling them that they are valuable to the community. That's what we're all about, community-building and renovating, drawing from the local work force, which is as it should be."

"a bathtub junkie" is an intravenous drug user for whom the type of drug is less important than being able to inject something.

The Promise

FICTION by Michael Walters

The wind was painfully cold. She chewed on her musty-smelling scarf as she pulled the broken old sleigh down 95th Street toward her apartment, turning her head every few seconds to make sure little Charlie and the bag of groceries hadn't spilled out on to the snow-piled sidewalk.

She had just endured standing in the Christmas Eve food bank line for the past four hours. The results were sore feet, a depleted spirit and one bag of groceries. She was pleased there had still been a turkey available by the time she reached the front. It actually looked more like a utility frying chicken than a turkey, but she could easily convince herself that it was a turkey.

There was tremendous relief when she stepped into the entrance of the apartment building. The air turned from a biting grief to a stale warmth. She picked up the sleigh and the bag of groceries and began to walk Charlie up the stairs to their suite. The old carpets were stained and littered with beer cans from the other, less family-oriented, tenants. Charlie was only turning three. She was glad he wasn't old enough to realize how disgusting this place was. She was mostly glad that Charlie wasn't old enough to hate her for living where and how they did.

She stood at the kitchen counter and sorted through the meager bag of food, trying to think creatively in terms of applying a Christmas theme to what she would make. There were a couple cans of lily sprouts, some small boxes of pasta, a dented can of cranberry sauce, half a loaf of white bread, some pork and beans, and the "turkey".

She watched little Charlie sitting in the corner on the cold floor. He was playing with a stuffed carrot toy that she had stolen for him from the doctor's office. He sat peacefully, petting the toy softly while singing his own version of "Michael Row Your Boat Ashore". She

remembered when she was a young girl growing up in Toronto. Her father wasn't a rich man, and spent most of his money on people other than his family, but he always provided a nice meal and a few gifts for his wife and children at Christmas time. Her mother, father and three sisters would feel very content once it was all over.

It tore her up inside to know that she couldn't even do this for her one son. All she had was her and her one son.

She set her groceries aside, and would worry about them tomorrow. She kept out a box of pasta and some bread to cook for their supper.

After a few hours had passed she tucked little Charlie into his little bed in the corner of the small chilly living room. She sat beside him and watched the precious little child sleep quietly. Tears began to roll down her skinny face. She thought about how little she had to give her son on Christmas day. She had no toys or Christmas pies and cakes. She had no decorations of

Santa or his elves. She didn't have a tree.

She had to give him something though. She walked over to the window and gazed out. The snow was falling magically, and she could see the festive lights shining brightly on top of the buildings downtown. She closed her eyes; what would she give Charlie tomorrow? It would have to be a gift that was real to him as well as to her. She knew she lived in a cold, and unhealthy home. She knew she had no money and no way to get any. She knew her spirit was fragile. What frightened her the most was that Charlie was getting older and becoming more aware of how tough his mother was making life for him.

She had to give Charlie a promise that things would get better. She had to tell him that life would be filled with more comfort and stability. She had to give him this promise. First, though, she had to find the hope herself. She would have to find a way to believe in herself again.

She walked back to where her son slept and lay down on the hard floor beside his bed.

"I will give him that promise. I will."

She closed her eyes to go to sleep and dream hopefully about next year.



In Part 6 of this story it's a hard, dangerous time for our hero who ran into the law in Winnipeg.

FICTION BY LAURIE MCCULLOUGH

When I got to the Vaughn Street Detention Centre I saw Jim Cameron. Cindy befriended Jim Cameron. He was a draft dodger from Minneapolis-St. Paul, south of Manitoba. His father told him he was a "traitor to the flag". His mother thought he was her darling boy. He hated himself with the kind of hatred you and I reserve for rapists, but he had a kind nature. He found himself a job as a prison guard. He remembered me, well, did all he could to make my life a little better. I got sent to Headingly, where I very nearly died. Then, I got sent from the Winnipeg General back to Vaughn Street, as a trustee. The screws were pretty good to me. I was twenty-one or twenty-two, could have passed for fifteen. First cook was a guy named Gordon Evers. He took a liking to me. Some of the cons wanted to hurt me, real bad, but Gordon didn't like that. If you wanted to find out what it's like to be old, you did NOT cross Gordon Evers. He never asked for anything. He figured I should look after myself, by myself, but he ran interference for me. He was a decent man who was good to me, likely saved my life. I was never expected to be his kid. I was so naive I had no idea how lucky I was. People are real idealistic, when they're young. I guess I would have ended up dead if he'd wanted to play with me.

He never asked, but he told me something, one night, in the dim glow from streetlights outside the dormitory windows. He laid on his bed, sipping brew he made out of peaches, from a jar.

"Laurie, about a third of the cons should be locked up, and they should be shaking the time they're shaking. About a third should never have been locked up.

The last third are the ones you watch, because they should never be let out."

We were all trustees, which is to say there were no bars on the windows, not a lot of supervision. I slept in a corner room on the second floor. I was a flunky, in the kitchen and, although I put in about twelve hours a day, it was off and on. I could sleep from nine until eleven. The sun crawled up my legs, from the corner window. I could feel it, on it's way to my waist. The difference between that sunshine and me was that it could be wherever it wanted.

A guy everybody called The Weasel (Honest!) told the world

he was going to kill me. He had big eyes, bulging, and muscles on him like I never had. Gordon Evers and Jim Cameron told me to volunteer to paint the kitchen, that night.

I did that.

About two, Jim came along to say:

"I'm going to the admissions desk. I wouldn't be surprised if I forgot to lock the kitchen door. The Weasel's asleep." and put a piece of pipe, about ten inches long, in my left hand. I wrapped it in a pair of dish towels, ran hot water over the works. Then, I went to visit The Weasel. He was sleeping in the basement dormitory and I hit him, twice. It was him or me and I knew it and kind thoughts have no place in a situation like that. The first time I hit him, it went clunk. The second time I hit him, it kind of slurped. I went back upstairs, finished painting the kitchen.

Jim locked the door.

Somebody woke up. He was looking at me, after I piped The Weasel. I'll never forget the whites of his eyes. I never knew who it was and I wasn't stupid enough to ask.

The next day, I had to do the same things I did every day, so I was beat.

I didn't have to be afraid of The Weasel.

When I got out I went to live with Jim, in an apartment block with 1912 above the entrance. That wasn't the address. The place had been kept in perfect, original condition. Hardwood floors,

woodgrain and ancient. Red carpets covered them. Jim had a woman, named Matty. She was a manic depressive and she led poor Jim a merry chase. Matty had a friend named Cathryn. Cathryn thought she was Mother Theresa. Wanted to adopt me, figuratively and romantically. I told her what it was like in jail. Her heart melted all over my ear. I never saw Cathryn, but we spent a lot of time on the phone. She lived in St. Paul and she was American as American could be. She nearly talked me into coming to her place. We exchanged pictures, but I knew I didn't belong there.

I'm as Canadian as Canadian can be.

Besides, I got deported from Yankeeland, a year before. The border guard told me:

"Don't come back. You come back there'll be no trial, no nothin' but two years in jail."

The Americans keep promises like that, so I never went back.

Part 7 of Kiss the Bride in the January issue.

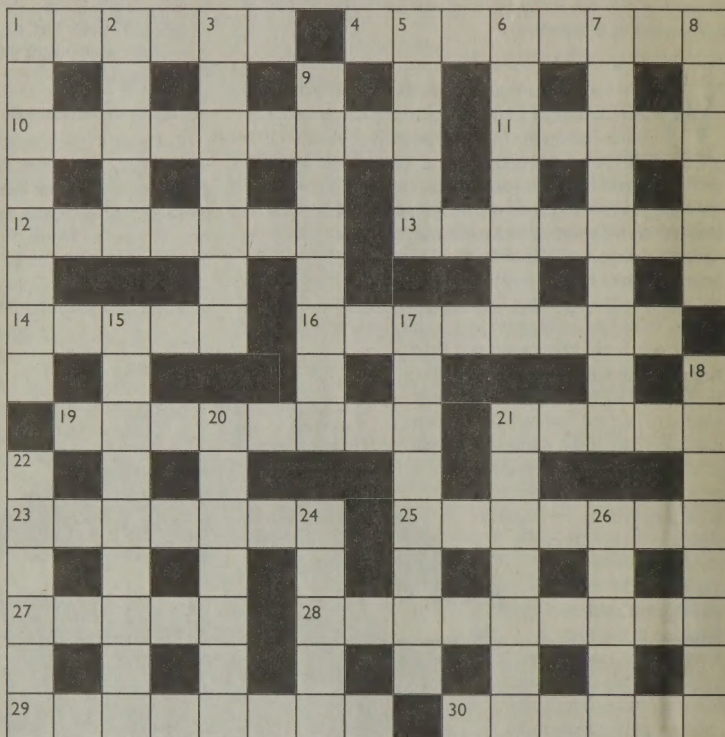
KISS THE BRIDE

A C R O S S

- 1 Pointed sticks, useful for killing vampires (6)
- 4 Small outside loo (8)
- 10 When in a panic, may break into one (4,5)
- 11 ___about, another name for a carnie (5)
- 12 Large heavy ropes used to moor ships (7)
- 13 Time for R & R (7)
- 14 A wide flat expanse - or uninteresting? (5)
- 16 Three of these mean elimination in showjumping (8)
- 19 A summary (8)
- 21 Aspirin maker (5)
- 23 Ball-peen, claw, sledge (7)
- 25 Dismally (7)
- 27 Spare movie background person? (5)
- 28 Canadian swimmer Mark ___ (9)
- 29 Living without planning ahead (3,2,3)
- 30 Confuses or muddles (6)

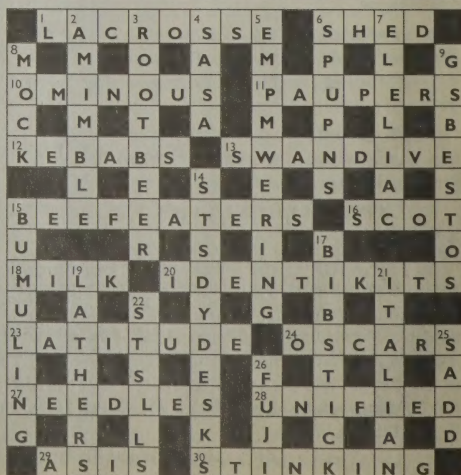
D O W N

- 1 Popular type of dances in the 50's (4,4)
- 2 To let (5)
- 3 From the land of the rising sun? (7)
- 5 In the meantime (5)
- 6 Brave, sometimes foolish actions (7)
- 7 Strangely (9)
- 8 A main course (6)
- 9 Often end a meal with these (8)
- 15 Not balanced or in harmony (9)
- 17 Glass enclosure for marine life (4,4)
- 18 Lightest-coloured irises (4,4)
- 20 Herb often found in spaghetti sauce (7)
- 21 Considered very lucky (7)
- 22 Sharp, cunning (6)
- 24 The Kama ___, ancient book of erotica (5)
- 26 Ridge in a surface to aid gripping (5)



*Puzzle #44 answers
will be published in
the January issue of
Our Voice.*

Answers to November 15 Crossword #43



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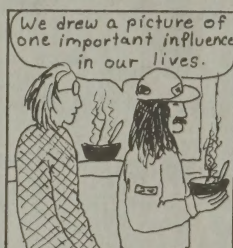
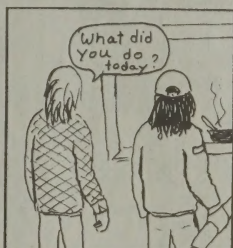
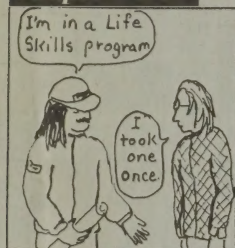
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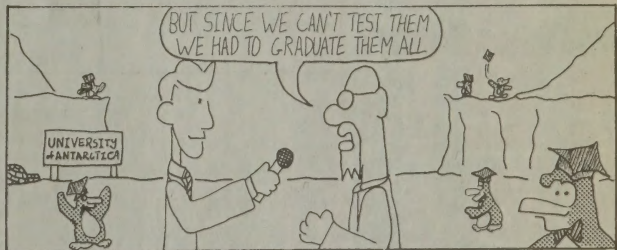
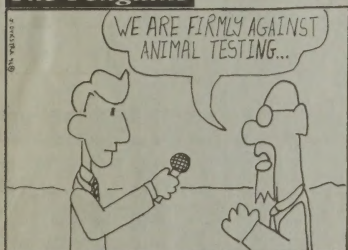
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The Penguins



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are we
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☐ Vendor profiles, people stories
☐ Editorial page and letters
☐ Feature articles in the centre
☐ Fiction stories, poetry
☐ Cartoons
☐ Crossword

What do you read most thoroughly?

- ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree
☐ Agree ☐ Disagree

4. I read quite a bit of each issue I buy.

- ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree

5. Our governments need to do more about the poverty crisis.

- ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree

6. I would volunteer more of my time and money to helping needy people if I could.

- ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree

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